

FORM B – BUILDING

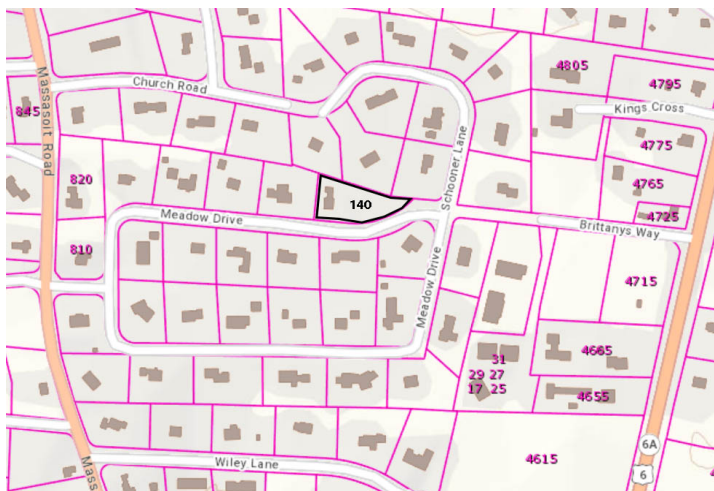
MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Photograph



View from SE.

Locus Map (north at top)



Source: Mass GIS Oliver Parcel Viewer

Recorded by: Kathryn Grover & Neil Larson
Larson Fisher Associates
Organization: Eastham Historical Commission
Date: June 2020

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

5-203

ORLEANS

EAS.762

Town/City: Town of Eastham

Place: *(neighborhood or village):*
North Eastham

Address: 140 Meadow Drive

Historic Name: John L. Jr. & Karen Pickells House

Uses: Present: single-family residence

Original: single-family residence

Date of Construction: ca. 1968

Source: deeds, newspaper article

Style/Form: Colonial Revival/Cape Cod

Architect/Builder: Robert J. Erickson, builder

Exterior Material:

Foundation: concrete block

Wall/Trim: wood shingle/wood

Roof: asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Rear wing reputedly moved from Orleans and attached to rear of house

Major Alterations *(with dates):*
none

Condition: good

Moved: no ☐ yes ☒ **Date:** 1968

Acreage: 0.48

Setting: The house is located in a late-20th-century planned residential subdivision comprised of half-acre lots.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

EASTHAM

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☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The John L. & Karen Pickells House, built ca. 1969, is a convincing replica of a traditional Three-quarters Cape Cod type with a center chimney plan, four-bay front façade with an off-center entrance and a one-story rear kitchen wing. However, based on information obtained from the owner and a 1991 newspaper article (see below), the wing reputedly is a two-room fisherman's built on Billingsgate Island in ca. 1912, which the builder of the house, Robert J. Erickson, moved to 140 Meadow Drive when building the house.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The house at 140 Meadow Drive was built in 1968 by Robert John Erickson, who had platted a 29-lot subdivision between Massasoit Road and the State Highway in 1963 and 1966. The "Nor'east Village" development was one of at least a dozen that Erickson, often in partnership with John B. Curtis, created in Eastham. Erickson was born in Quincy in 1930, the son of carpenter Arthur Erickson and his wife Ellen Sandblom, also from Quincy. He bought his first Eastham parcel in 1953 from his wife's brother William B. Sandblom, who had begun buying land in town in 1948. The Nor'east Village development was created on farmland once owned by George A. Nickerson (1883-1953) and his second wife Nellie Sanders Nickerson and had earlier belonged to Solomon Snow, the father of Nickerson's first wife Eva.¹

According to Alberta George, who with her sister Linda G. Greenwall acquired 140 Meadow Drive in 1985, the rear wing of the house is an older dwelling that Erickson moved from Canal Street in Orleans, near the current rotary in Orleans and South Eastham, to the site in 1968. The house is said to have been a two-room "fisherman's house" floated across Cape Cod Bay from Billingsgate Island, once the site of a fishing settlement of some thirty houses, a schoolhouse and a lighthouse; repeated flooding and erosion had compelled most residents to move away by 1912, and some are known to have floated their houses across the harbor and into Wellfleet. Why this house should have been moved to Orleans, if it indeed was, is unclear, but it was at some point attached to the three-quarters Cape on Meadow Drive in Eastham.²

In August 1969 Erickson and his wife Elizabeth sold the house and lot, numbered 7, to John Lovell Pickells Jr. and his wife Karen Wehmeyer Pickells.³ Pickells (1942-1972) was the son of Episcopal cleric John Lovell Pickells (1904-80), who in 1944 bought a "one story portable bungalow" on an acre north of Nauset Light in Eastham and began to summer there with his wife Edna Belle Ferguson and their children Sally, Marguerite, Betsey, and John L. Jr. John L. Pickells Jr. married in 1963 in Kent, Connecticut, where his father had just become a chaplain of the South Kent School.⁴ In 1973, after her husband's death Karen W. Pickells remarried and sold 140 Meadow Drive to David H. Wood of Brewster. Daniel O. S. and Barbara L. Jennings owned the property from 1975 to 1979 and sold it in the latter year to John E. and Shirley A. Sutherland. In 1985 the Sutherlands sold 140 Meadow Drive to Alberta E. George and her sister, both of Cobleskill, New York. They were the owners of record in 2020.⁵

¹ Shirley N. Williams, Orleans; Arthur C. Nickerson and George S. Nickerson, Eastham, to Robert J. and Elizabeth Ann Erickson and John B. and Ruth F. Curtiss, 15 April 1963, BCD 1198:485. See also Affidavit, Maurice W. Wiley, Massasoit Road, 20 April 1963, BCD 1198:483, which lays out the history of the property and its owners.

² "Eastham," *The Register*, 23 May 1991, S8. No documentation of these claims is offered in this article. See also "Billingsgate island," Atlas Obscura, <https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/billingsgate-island#:~:text=The%20residents%20of%20Billingsgate%20Island,and%20dig%20clams%20and%20oysters.>

³ Robert J. and Elizabeth Ann Erickson to John L. Pickells Jr. and Karen W. Pickells, Harwich, 1 August 1969, BCD 1445:262.

⁴ For background on Rev. John Pickells see Burt Mastracchio, "The Gifts of Reverend 'Pickles', Part 1," EG News, <https://eastgreenwichnews.com/the-gifts-of-reverend-pickles-part-1/>. Pickells had been rector of St. Luke's Episcopal Church in East Greenwich, RI, from 1942 through at least 1955.

⁵ Karen P. Samuelson fka Karen W. Pickells, Harwich, to David H. Wood, Brewster, 1 June 1973, BCD 1871:232; David H. Wood, Meadow Drive, to Daniel O. S. and Barbara L. Jennings, Shaker Heights OH, 1 July 1975, BCD 2204:196; Daniel O. S. and Barbara L. Jennings, Rumfort RI, to John E. and Shirley A. Sutherland, 18 October 1979, BCD 3011:43; John E. and Shirley A. Sutherland, 7 Meadow Drive, to Albert E. George and Linda G. Greenwall, Cobleskill NY, 1 November 1985, BCD 4784:221. The 140 Meadow Drive house is sited on Lot 7 of the Erickson plan, depicted on both "Nor'East Village Subdivision Plan of Land in North Eastham, Mass. Made for Robert J. Erickson and John B. Curtis," May 1963, BCP 178:87 and "Nor'east Village' Subdivision Plan of Land in North Eastham, Mass., Made for Robert J. Erickson," May 1966, BCP 206:75.

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MAPS

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PHOTOGRAPHS

(credit Larson Fisher Associates, 2019 unless otherwise noted)



View from SW.